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Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General decides to pursue more vigorous regional approach to Rwandan crisis; asks Robert Dillon to undertake mission to region; seeks better use of resources and comprehensive response to problems.

+ Secretary-General expresses satisfaction at security measures for International Conference on Population and Development; says issues raised in Cairo will focus public attention and mobilize public opinion.

+ Secretary-General reports significant progress in Mozambican peace process; says political conditions for October elections have been met, but security situation has deteriorated.

+ De facto authorities in Haiti release fuel shipment for use by humanitarian organizations.

+ United Nations expresses concern regarding situation of some 25,000 refugees from Bihac in Croatia.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has decided to pursue a more vigorous regional approach to the Rwandan crisis and its effects on Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire, a United Nations spokesman announced today. The Secretary-General has asked Robert Sherwood Dillon, former United States Ambassador to Lebanon and Deputy Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to undertake a mission to the region. Mr. Dillon will consult with all concerned and identify measures to strengthen the coordination of United Nations humanitarian efforts there.

The Secretary-General said the new approach would lead to a more effective use of resources and to a comprehensive set of measures to address the problems of the region. It would also help identify problems that might have implications for other countries.

(more)

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In a related development, the Secretary-General reiterated his concern at the deterioration in security conditions in Rwandan refugee camps. He has instructed Special Representative Shahryar Khan to discuss the matter with neighbouring countries and to make recommendations for improving security in camps in Zaire and Tanzania.

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On the eve of his departure for Cairo, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today expressed satisfaction at the security measures taken by the Egyptian Government for the International Conference on Population and Development. He noted that 148 countries were planning to participate, and that 19 delegations would be led by Heads of State or Government. Those figures revealed the strong support for the Conference and the importance which Governments attached to it.

The Secretary-General said that while there had been some controversy concerning issues before the Conference, its aim was to focus public attention and to mobilize public opinion. The Conference was about the delicate equilibrium between humanity and its environment; issues such as population, resources, food supplies and the environment could hardly be addressed without causing ripples and even some storms.

The Conference would not impose policies, nor would it be a treaty-making exercise, the Secretary-General stressed. As a United Nations endeavour, it would have the purpose, stated in the Charter, of "harmonizing the actions of nations" in the attainment of common ends. He was thus looking forward to the Conference and to the follow-up to its recommendations.

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There has been significant progress in the implementation of the Mozambican peace process, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report on the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) dated 26 August, he noted that troops had been demobilized and that the major political conditions for the elections on 27 and 28 October had been met. However, the security situation had deteriorated in recent months, and public safety was threatened by increasing criminal activity and banditry.

The Secretary-General stressed that Mozambicans must ensure that the elections were free and fair, and that reconciliation and stability were promoted in the transitional period. He reminded the parties of their obligation to respect the results of the elections. He suggested that an agreement be concluded to allow opposition parties to play a meaningful role afterwards. In the meantime, the United Nations would continue to aid the peace process in order to bring it to a successful conclusion.

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The de facto authorities in Haiti have released a shipment of 10,000 barrels of fuel for use by humanitarian organizations, a United Nations

spokesman announced today. The shipment had been held under seal since its arrival in Port-au-Prince in July, despite the completion of all normal formalities.

Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Peter Hansen last week appealed for the release of the fuel, warning that humanitarian operations would grind to a halt without it. He noted that the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) provided fuel for over 300 humanitarian organizations in Haiti, and that those organizations were feeding more than 1 million people.

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A United Nations spokesman today expressed concern at the situation of some 23,000 to 25,000 refugees from the Bihac pocket who are currently in United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) Sector North in Croatia. The refugees -- followers of rebel leader Fikret Abdic -- fled from Bihac after it fell to the Bosnian Government Army almost two weeks ago. He said the refugees were living in "appalling" conditions in a heavily mined area, and warned of a danger of epidemics.

UNPROFOR has making every effort to encourage the refugees to return to Bihac, according to the spokesman. Civilian monitors have been patrolling the area in order to build confidence, and have reported very little damage to abandoned homes. Moreover, Bosnian Vice-President Ejup Ganic has given assurances that the refugees will be well treated if they return.

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